

Ironwood Forest National Monument
Draft Goals and Objective on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat
May 19, 2004
Comment Summary

The following are summarized comments from the public meeting conducted Wednesday, May 19, 2004 at the Pima County Parks and Recreation Center in Tucson, Arizona. The meeting recapped the April 29, 2004 meeting and presented the draft goals and objectives for wildlife and wildlife habitat within the monument. The meeting included a presentation by Marty Tuegel of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which included discussion on known species within the monument and a brief discussion on habitat fragmentation. J.P. Charpentier from URS Corporation presented BLM's current management practices within the monument and a provided a brief overview of the draft goals and objectives for wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The meeting attendance included 27 individuals from the general public as well as agencies (outside of BLM). Attendees worked in two breakout discussion groups and discussed the draft goals and objectives.

The comment summary below combines comments from both breakout groups.

General Comments

- The Cocoraque Coordinated Resource Management Plan states that theft and off-road driving affect special status species of cacti and grazing does not affect the cacti.
- BLM should adopt the definition of "restore" from the Natural Resource Conservation Service. A member of the public provided this definition to BLM for its use.
- Each of the wildlife and wildlife habitat goals should have an objective regarding the need for research within the monument for baseline information.
- The goals need to ensure that the monument is a naturally functioning ecosystem.
- Incorporate more specific objectives for wildlife populations and include the objective developed at the previous meeting regarding bighorn sheep. The previous draft objective read as follows, "By 2010, the IFNM will maintain a bighorn sheep population at a minimum of 140."
- Ensure that the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) will be involved with setting wildlife population objectives.
- Coordinate with AGFD on all wildlife goals and implementation of objectives.
- Allow for predator control when managing for prey populations.
- Balance management of predators and prey.
- Provide free/wildlife water to alleviate additional stresses on wildlife populations.
- Allow/provide for habitat manipulation (e.g., forage enhancement during drought).
- Manage selected species for long-term sustainable population viability.
- Coordinate with management agencies around the monument because those actions will affect the monument.
- Work with the County for "buffer overlay zones."

- Make efforts to communicate with the general public regarding enhancing habitat around the monument.
- Pursue buffer overlay zone ordinance (BOZO) for the monument within Pima County (e.g., the existing ordinance that provides a protective buffer overlay zone around sensitive areas, such as Saguaro National Park).
- Restore areas affected by recreational shooting (e.g., clean up lead remnants).
- Create a research goal with specific objectives for mammals, birds, invertebrates, etc.
- Establish wildlife population goals to allow for management and conservation activities (e.g., coordination with AGFD).

Specific Comments on the Draft Goals and Objectives for Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat¹

GOAL NUMBER 1: *Maintain or restore ecosystem health and native biodiversity.*

- It seems that management is in balance currently, however the public has concerns that its “idea” of restore may not be what can be sustained.
- Develop an objective that addresses exotic species.
- Develop an objective to maintain wildlife corridors.
- Re-word the goal to say, “Work with other agencies to develop a process for implementing reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings to maintain or restore ecosystem health and native biodiversity.” This revision incorporates the objective to enhance the goal.

Objective Number 1: *Management and implementation of all resource programs must consider the standards component of the “Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.”*

- List all applicable resource management plans (RMP) and guidance document versus listing only the *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (e.g., include the Phoenix RMP).
- Clarify if grazing will continue.
- This objective means that BLM will follow the protocol established in the *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration*.

Objective Number 2: *Acquire non-Federal lands within the monument based on the potential to maintain or restore ecosystem health and native biodiversity.*

- Indicate how BLM will “rank” land for acquisition (e.g., federal or county acquisition) and state that potential land acquisition(s) are based on availability.
- Land should be identified that is available for possible acquisition and BLM should clarify why those lands are available.
- The objectives are too general (not tangible). As an example, a good objective would be one that states, “140 sheep within the monument by 2010.”
- Mention lands outside, but adjacent, the monument and how acquisitions of those lands will impact resources within the monument.

¹ The goals and objectives were numbered for capturing public comments only and do not indicate a hierarchy or priority of importance.

- Remove the word “within” to broaden the language.

Objective Number 3: *Evaluate proposals to enhance wildlife populations through reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings of wildlife species.*

- This objective belongs under a general wildlife goal.
- Remove the language that states, “reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings,” etc. so that this objective is more vague. List the terminology on reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings when developing alternatives, not in the objective.
- Include the word “habitat” in this objective as “wildlife habitat” better supports the goal.
- Remove the words “evaluate proposals” and insert language stating, “coordinate with the AGFD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance populations using techniques such as reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings.”

GOAL NUMBER 2: *Conserve and recover threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and manage to prevent the listing of additional species.*

- Include “restore” in this goal.
- Incorporate language from the objective (into this goal) that states, “Manage desert tortoise habitat to achieve ‘no net loss’ in the quality or quantity of desert tortoise habitat. Mitigation for conflicts is permissible to achieve no net loss in quantity or quality of desert tortoise habitat.”

Objective Number 1: No specific comments were received on this objective.

Objective Number 2: *Acquire lands that contain habitat for listed or proposed species, as the opportunity arises and in accordance with the following criteria.*

- Language appeared to be missing from this objective regarding “the following criteria.”
- List the criteria in an alternative and not here in the objective.

Objective Number 3: *Within the range/distribution of listed or proposed species, livestock grazing allowable use will conform to the guidelines described in the “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” section of Guidance Criteria for Determinations of Effects of Grazing Permit Issuance and Renewal on Threatened and Endangered Species (Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona and New Mexico, 1999), or any subsequent agreed upon amendment to these guidelines.*

- This objective is too narrow in scope and needs to be stated more clearly and concisely.
- Add the words “not to adversely affect.”

Objective Number 4: *Continue to support recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species that occur on the monument.*

- Keep this objective because it is a good idea to restate the obvious (required to comply with the Endangered Species Act) to ensure it does not get overlooked.

Objective Number 5: *Update the BLM Sensitive Species List for the monument, and implement management decisions to support their conservation.*

- BLM should state what standards it must follow to continuously update the list of sensitive species henceforth (e.g., revisit and revise the list every five years when BLM's management plans undergo review).
- Combine objectives regarding species that are threatened and endangered, special status, and Arizona wildlife species of concern.
- Develop a BLM specific list of species for the monument because the existing BLM list of sensitive species is developed at the national level.

Objective Number 6: No specific comments were received on this objective.

GOAL NUMBER 3: *Conserve, restore, or enhance native wildlife habitats.*

- Re-word to say, "...enhance native wildlife and wildlife habitats."
- Obtain data to support a particular point in time to which something would be restored.
- Restoration could be based on a pre-determined list of species that may need enhancing (e.g., restore vegetation to a point in time when the species of concern was stable).

Objective Number 1: No specific comments were received on this objective.

Objective Number 2: No specific comments were received on this objective.

Objective Number 3: *Manage desert tortoise habitat to achieve "no net loss" in the quality or quantity of desert tortoise habitat. Mitigation for conflicts is permissible to achieve no net loss in quantity or quality of desert tortoise habitat.*

- Include more than tortoise and bighorn sheep under the objectives for goal number 3. Include additional species from various habitat/vegetation types.
- Be consistent with the terminology stating "quantity and quality" in both sentences in this objective. Remove the word "or" and replace with "and" when referring to quantity and quality.
- Include/add this objective under goal number 2 (threatened and endangered species).

Objective Number 4: *Support and/or implement public education program(s) directed to management of wildlife and wildlife habitat.*

- Re-word this to say support and/or implement "addressing management of wildlife and wildlife habitat" and remove the word "directed to."

Objective Number 5: *Manage/conservate areas identified as important for the viability of the bighorn sheep populations, including but not limited to lambing areas and movement corridors.*

- Add this objective to the threatened and endangered species goal.

Objective Number 6: *Evaluate impacts of existing and potential future artificial wildlife waters. Manage the waters accordingly, including existing and consideration of new artificial waters.*

- Delete the last sentence/phrase from this goal.
- It is not clear for what BLM is managing; need to re-word this objective.
- Re-word to the objective to present a concept versus an activity (e.g. manage for wildlife waters). Develop activity-based language during the alternative stage and not in the objective.

GOAL NUMBER 4: *Maintain, restore, or enhance wildlife corridors.*

- Add the word “identify.”

Objective Number 1: *Maintain, restore, or enhance corridors between blocks of habitat to ensure unrestricted wildlife movement.*

- Make this objective the goal and have only one objective (versus two). See objective No. 2 below.

Objective Number 2: *Acquire lands or easements within the monument deemed necessary to provide corridors between blocks of habitat for wildlife.*

- Insert “acquire and manage” to the remaining objective.

GOAL NUMBER FIVE: *Maintain habitat connectivity and limit habitat fragmentation.*

- Add the word “restore” to this goal.
- Add the word “identify.”
- Maintain connectivity between the Sawtooth and West Silver Bell Mountains.

Objective Number 1: No specific comments were received on this objective.

Objective Number 2: *Protect large, contiguous blocks of native Sonoran desert habitat to ensure habitat remains viable and sustainable.*

- Define the word “viable.”
- Remove the words “native” and “Sonoran Desert” language and re-word to say “contiguous blocks of habitat.”